

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Foamex

New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Flame 1 Gets Organized

Client Profile:

Foamex International re-located to Santa Teresa, New Mexico, 18 years ago and employs approximately 200 employees working two shifts. Foamex is a major supplier of foam and foam laminates to the auto industry and to many of the major auto makers. The company makes the foam itself, cuts it to size, and laminates the foam to the customer's desired fabric. Foamex is a well managed, high performance company that leads the industry in foam fabrics to auto makers. Foamex maintains high quality products and has added ISO and QS certifications to their list of accreditations.

Situation:

Foamex's employees were trained in the principles of Lean Manufacturing and were well on their way to implementing this technology in various areas of the facility. Corporate mandated them to also implement 5S in all operations of the facility. New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership (New Mexico MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, had been working with Foamex and had the opportunity to train several members of Foamex in Lean Manufacturing. Once again, Foamex contacted the New Mexico MEP for assistance.

Solution:

New Mexico MEP was selected to provide the training. Foamex selected the Flame 1 Lamination area to implement their first 5S. A four-day 5S class was chosen by the team, and training and implementation began. Twelve employees of Foamex attended the class, including personnel from Human Resources, maintenance, receptionist, Quality Control, and operators of the Flame Area.

Results:

- * Reduced travel time between tasks by 50 percent (from 3 hours to 1.5 hours per 9-hour day).
- * Produced cost savings of \$29,325 in safety performance.
- * Improved work environment and employee morale.

Testimonial:

"I was really impressed at the enthusiasm of all of us that participated in the four-day class. Everyone got on their knees and cleaned and left every day so tired, yet so proud of the accomplishments that each of us made. This created a real team spirit, we trusted each other and worked towards one goal. We raised the bar in what we expect of ourselves and others. A lot of employees in the team that were quiet or shy before must have felt so comfortable that they were able to get up and talk about their ideas in detail. This showed us that people felt confident in what they were doing. They knew nobody was going to make fun of them, because our trainers made that very clear with the ground rules; instead, everyone showed respect for their participation. The proudest moment was when we made our presentation to all of management, supervisors and office staff. Every one of the team members

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gave a speech of what the accomplishments had been. Then we took them to the Flame 1 and explained all of the changes. They were so surprised at the difference, the organization and cleanliness of the area. During our closing meeting the testimony by each employee was unbelievable. The words being heard were that of enthusiasm, accomplishment, raising the bar, teambuilding, trust, confidence and empowerment. The persons that came into our facility to train us on 5S are wonderful trainers. They know their material, they themselves got in and physically helped, they made the class so simple that we all understood it. We were encouraged to ask questions if we had any doubt. They all did a great job! They themselves make a great team! We thank you for your time and support. The benefits that will result from this training are unimaginable."

Lou Bonilla-Jones, Human Resources Manager